

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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TAGS: PINT, AR

SUBJECT: REFORM OF POLITICAL PARTY STATUTE

1. CONGRESSIONAL CIRCLES ARE REPORTEDLY QUITE CONCERNED WITH THE DRAFT OF A NEW POLITICAL PARTIES STATUTE RECENTLY PROPOSED BY THE EXECUTIVE. THE PRESIDENTIAL DRAFT IS THE WORK OF EX-INTERIOR MINISTER ANGEL ROBLEDO AND WAS SENT TO ALL PARTY LEADERS IN CONGRESS LAST MONTH. THE BASIC TENET OF THE DOCUMENT IS THAT CONGRESSIONAL SEATS ARE "THE PROPERTY OF THE PARTY AND NOT OF THE INDIVIDUALS WHO HOLD THEM". ACCORDINGLY, THE DRAFT WOULD EMPOWER NATIONAL, PROVINCIAL, OR DISTRICT POLITICAL PARTIES TO APPOINT THE REPLACEMENT OF ANY LEGISLATOR WHO RESIGNED, WAS EXPELLED, OR OTHERWISE BROKE WITH HIS POLITICAL COLLEAGUES. UNDER EXISTING STATUTES A DEPUTY CAN RESIGN FROM HIS PARTY BLOC AND RETAIN HIS SEAT, AS HAS BEEN DONE NOTABLY BY 37 PERONIST DEPUTIES WHO REGIGNED FROM THE PARTY BLOC TO FORM THE SO-CALLED "WORK GROUP."

2. UNDERSTANDABLY, REACTION FROM MANY LEGISLATORS WHO HAVE SEEN THE PROPOSED PROJECT HAS BEEN STRONGLY NEGATIVE. WORK GROUP SPOKESMAN JESUS PORTO SAID THE DRAFT "VIOLATES CONSTITUTIONAL PRECEPTS THAT CLEARLY ESTABLISH THAT EACH LEGISLATOR REPRESENTS THE PEOPLE WHO ELECT HIM AND, THEREFORE, IS THE OWNER OF HIS SEAT." A RADICAL PARTY SPOKESMAN, WHILE ADMITTING THAT HIS PARTY HAS ALWAYS HELD THAT "SEATS BELONG TO THE PARTY," INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD OPPOSE THIS REFORM ON THE GROUNDS THAT

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IT IMPLIES "SUFFOCATING ALL FORMS OF REBELLION." SO FAR, THE ONLY VOICE IN FAVOR OF THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION IS VERTICALISTA

CHAMBER LEADER JOSE AMERICE, WHO SAID THAT HE HAD "ALWAYS CONSIDERED THAT SEATS BELONG TO THE PARTIES AND NOT TO THOSE PEOPLE WHO MIGHT TEMPORARILY HOLD THEM".

3. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THE DRAFT STANDS LITTLE, IF ANY, CHANCE OF BEING PASSED BY THE CONGRESS, IT DOES INDICATE THE GOVERNMENT'S INCREASING CONCERN WITH THE LACK OF PARTY DISCIPLINE IN CONGRESS. IN ADDITION, WITH BUENOS AIRES AND SANTA FE PROVINCES CONTROLLED BY DISSIDENT ELEMENTS AND ITS CONGRESSIONAL MAJORITY EFFECTIVELY NEUTRALIZED, THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE HARD PRESSED TO INFLUENCE THE ELECTORAL PROCESS AS FREELY AS IT MIGHT LIKE. WITHOUT THIS ABILITY, MRS. PERON AND HER ADVISORS MAY FEEL FORCED TO ATTEMPT MORE OF THE AUTOCRATIC, DRACONIAN MEASURES THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THEIR ISOLATION.
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